

# CHAPTER 4

## MILITARY DUTIES OF THE NAVAL OFFICER

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

1. Describe the authority of naval officers.
  2. Identify the duties and responsibilities of the officer of the deck underway.
  3. Identify the duties and responsibilities of the combat information center watch officer.
  4. Identify the duties and responsibilities of the engineering officer of the watch.
  5. Identify the duties and responsibilities of the command duty officer.
  6. Identify the duties and responsibilities of the officer of the deck in port.
  7. Identify the duties and responsibilities of the division officer.
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The duties of the naval officer are many. They are often complex, dealing with technical areas or personnel problems. One of your challenges as a naval officer is to carry out successfully all the duties you are assigned in an efficient manner. To achieve this task requires much forethought. Although your duties remain somewhat consistent, the conditions vary on a day-to-day basis; sometimes they even change during the course of the day.

After your entry-level training, your first duty assignment will probably be as a division officer. Division officers are assigned by the commanding officer to manage a division of the unit's organization. *Standard Organization and Regulations of the U.S. Navy*, OPNAVINST 3120.32B, generally referred to as the *SORN*, outlines the division officer's duties. Note, don't confuse the *SORN* with the *SORM*. The *SORM* is the *Standard Organization and Regulations Manual* for your individual command. We will look at some of the division officer's duties later in this chapter, but first let's look at your authority and responsibility as a naval officer.

### AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

When you accept your commission as a naval officer, you assume many responsibilities. Your peers in the civilian sector would have to work several years into their careers before assuming such responsibilities. To handle these responsibilities, you need the authority to carry them out. Authority within the Navy means seniors have the legal right to require subordinates to obey their lawful orders. Your authority can be either general or organizational. You use general authority to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of your assignment or specific billet within an organization. By virtue of your commission, you are granted the organizational authority to perform your duties and responsibilities based on *United States Navy Regulations, 1990*.

### NAVY REGULATIONS

*Navy Regulations* outlines the authority of naval personnel in great detail. (Chapter 10 of *Navy Regulations*, which has several articles

dealing with authority, will be covered more thoroughly in chapter 6 of this text.) For the purpose of explanation and brevity, article 1012 best describes the authority of naval officers as follows:

All officers of the naval service, of whatever designation or corps, shall have all the necessary authority for the performance of their duties and shall be obeyed by all persons, of whatever designation or corps, who are, in accordance with these regulations and orders from competent authority, subordinate to them.

Chapter 11 of *Navy Regulations* explains some of your duties and responsibilities. *SORN* also explains your duties and responsibilities, but it explains them more in detail than in general terms.

## **STANDARD ORGANIZATION AND REGULATIONS OF THE U.S. NAVY (SORN)**

*SORN* applies to all members of the U.S. Navy. It lists the duties and responsibilities for almost every billet and watch station in the Navy. It also gives us regulations on which to base our unit and watch organizations.

No portion of the *SORN* is intended to contradict or supersede any portion of *Navy Regulations*. Many articles in the *SORN* and *Navy Regulations* appear to say the same thing; but they are separate directives, and both apply to all members of the naval service.

In addition to your primary duties, you may be assigned a number of collateral duties. Guidance on the performance of collateral duties can also be found in the *SORN*.

Do not rely solely on *Navy Regulations* and *SORN* as your only sources for guidance in performing your duties. Use other directives and instructions that further amplify what you are required to do, such as those written by your command.

## **WATCH STANDING**

As a naval officer, whether you are assigned ashore or afloat, a portion of your duties will involve watch standing. Although many watches are assigned to personnel assigned to shore duty, the primary scope of this text deals with the watch organization of an afloat command.

*SORN* defines a watch as any period during which an individual is assigned specific, detailed responsibilities on a recurring basis. Watches on board ships are set both in port and underway. Commanding officers establish the watches required for the safety, security, and proper operation of their command.

Although ships have numerous watches, those we discuss in the following paragraphs are the primary control watches for a ship underway.

## **OFFICER OF THE DECK UNDERWAY**

One of the most important watches on a ship at sea is that of the officer of the deck (OOD). The commanding officer designates the assignment of the OOD in writing. The OOD takes charge of the safe and proper operation of the ship.

The duties, responsibilities, and authority of the OOD include the following:

- Being aware of the tactical situation and geographic factors that may affect safe navigation and taking action to avoid the danger of grounding or collision
- Issuing necessary orders to the helm and main engine control to avoid danger, to take or keep an assigned station, and to change course and speed following the orders of proper authority
- Making all required reports to the commanding officer
- Supervising the personnel on watch on the bridge, ensuring all deck log entries are made, and signing the log at the end of the watch
- Being aware of the status of the engineering plant and keeping the engineering officer of the watch advised of power requirements
- Carrying out the routine of the ship as published in the plan of the day and other ship's directives
- Supervising and conducting on-the-job training for the junior officer of the watch (JOOW), the junior officer of the deck (JOD), and enlisted personnel of the bridge watch

Although we have listed only some of the OOD's duties and responsibilities, those listed show the enormous responsibility involved. When an individual is designated OOD (underway), the commanding officer has placed special trust and confidence in that person's capabilities.

Although the OOD is responsible for the deck and the conn, the OOD normally delegates the conn to the JOOD. Just what are the deck and the conn? The deck refers to the OOD's watch; it means the OOD is in charge of all deck functions and supervises the maneuvers of the ship. The conn means the control, or direction by rudder and engine orders, of the movements of a ship. The JOOD is in training for OOD and must, therefore, learn how to conn the ship. Even when delegating the conn, the OOD still remains responsible for the actions of the conning officer.

A matter of extreme importance is that the bridge watch team know who has the deck and the conn. Only one person at a time can conn the ship, and that person must be known by the watch team. For this reason, when one officer transfers the conn to another, that officer announces this transfer in the pilot house. Normally, the conning officer being relieved announces, "This is [Rank or Rate and name of the officer being relieved]. [Rank or rate and name of relieving officer] has the conn." The officer assuming the conn then announces, "This is [Rank or Rate and name]. I have the conn." Each member of the watch team acknowledges this report. Customarily the helmsman and lee helmsman report the course being steered, the magnetic-compass course, and the speed and rpm indicated. A similar announcement is also made for relief of the deck.

### **COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER WATCH OFFICER (CICWO)**

The officer who supervises the operation of the combat information center (CIC) is the CIC watch officer (CICWO). The CICWO acts as a representative of the CIC officer. The duties of the CICWO include the following:

- Supervising personnel on watch in CIC, ensuring air, surface, and submarine contacts are detected and reported within the capabilities of the equipment
- Keeping the OOD advised of recommended procedures for maintaining station, avoiding navigational hazards and collisions, and speed or course changes necessary to change or regain station

- Keeping the OOD informed concerning all radars in operation and those under repair
- Ensuring all CIC logs are properly maintained for the duration of the watch
- Supervising and evaluating the on-the-job training of enlisted CIC personnel on watch, including the ship's lookouts

The CICWO normally makes reports to the OOD. If a tactical action officer (TAO) is assigned to the watch bill, the CICWO reports to the TAO on matters of tactical employment and defense.

### **Tactical Action Officer (TAO)**

The tactical action officer (TAO) acts as the commanding officer's representative concerning the tactical employment and defense of the unit. The TAO is responsible for the safe and efficient operations of the combat systems and for any other duties prescribed by the commanding officer. The TAO, who is not assigned to the watch bill during normal peacetime steaming (Condition IV), stands watch in CIC.

When so authorized by the commanding officer, the TAO may direct the OOD to take tactical actions required to fight or defend the unit. The TAO and the OOD have to work as a team. With the TAO in CIC and the OOD on the bridge, the TAO's direction could possibly place the ship in danger. In these cases the OOD should decline the direction and immediately advise the CO.

### **Communications Watch Officer**

Another important position in the underway watch organization is the communications watch officer. The communications watch officer is responsible for receiving all incoming message traffic and ensuring it is properly routed. The communications watch officer sends all operational messages to the CIC watch officer. The communications watch officer is also responsible for transmitting the messages the unit needs to send and ensuring all radio frequencies are properly set. A ship must be able to communicate to accomplish its mission.

### **ENGINEERING OFFICER OF THE WATCH (EOOW)**

The engineering officer of the watch (EOOW) is in charge of the safe and proper operation of

the ship's engineering plant. The EOOW has to be thoroughly familiar with the ship's engineering systems, including their capabilities and limitations. If a casualty occurs to any piece of equipment in the engineering plant, the EOOW must know the proper procedures to follow to control the casualty. Some of the duties and responsibilities of the EOOW are as follows:

- Supervising personnel on watch in the Engineering Department to ensure they operate machinery according to instructions; ensuring personnel maintain required logs, properly man machinery and controls, and carry out all required inspections and safety precautions
- Ensuring personnel promptly and properly execute all orders from the OOD concerning the speed and direction of rotation of the main engines
- Immediately executing all emergency orders concerning the speed and direction of rotation of the screws
- Immediately informing the OOD and the engineer officer of any casualty that would prevent the execution of engine speed orders or would affect the operational capability of the ship
- Keeping informed of the power requirements for operations; ensuring the propulsion and auxiliary machinery combination effectively meets operational requirements
- Supervising and coordinating on-the-job training for engineering personnel on watch

The EOOW is the OOD's link to the engineering plant. They work together and should keep each other informed. The OOD should inform the EOOW as soon as possible when changes in speed are anticipated. For example, to increase speed substantially to go to an assigned station, the OOD should notify the EOOW of the anticipated speed required. This gives the EOOW time to start additional machinery needed to meet the increased speed requirement.

#### **COMMAND DUTY OFFICER (CDO)**

The command duty officer (CDO) is the direct representative of the commanding officer. Some

large ships have a CDO assigned underway, but in this text we will discuss the CDO in port.

The commanding officer designates an officer, or in some cases a petty officer, as the CDO. The CDO carries out the routine of the unit in port and supervises the OOD (in port) in the safety and general duties of the unit. The CDO carries out the duties of the executive officer (XO) during the XO's temporary absence. Some of the duties and responsibilities of the CDO are as follows:

- Advising and, if necessary, directing the OOD in the general duties of the unit
- Keeping informed of the unit's position, mooring lines or ground tackle in use, status of the engineering plant, and all other matters affecting the safety and security of the unit
- Relieving the OOD when necessary for the safety of the unit, and informing the commanding officer when such action is taken
- In the absence of the executive officer, receiving the eight-o'clock reports from the department duty officers and reporting the condition of the unit to the commanding officer
- Mustering, drilling, and inspecting duty emergency parties

Normally, the CDO stands a 24-hour watch. Most other watches are only for a 4-hour period. The CDO, being the direct representative of the commanding officer, has full and complete authority over the unit. All personnel, regardless of rate or rank, are subordinate to the CDO.

#### **OFFICER OF THE DECK (IN PORT)**

The OOD (in port) is the officer or petty officer on watch designated by the commanding officer to be in charge of the unit. The OOD's primary responsibility is the safety and proper operation of the unit. The OOD's other duties and responsibilities include the following:

- Keeping continually informed of the unit's position, mooring lines or ground tackle in use, tide and weather information, the status of the engineering plant, the status of the unit's boats, and all other matter affecting the safety and security of the unit

- Ensuring all required entries are made in the deck log, and signing the log at the end of the watch
- Carrying out the routine as published in the plan of the day, ensuring the executive officer, CDO, and department heads are informed of circumstances requiring changes in routine or other action on their part
- Ensuring boats are operated safely and all boat safety regulations are observed
- Supervising the operation of the general announcing system; the general and chemical alarms; and the whistle, gong, and bell
- Displaying required absentee pennants, colors, and general information signals; and supervising the rendering of honors
- Making all required reports to the CDO, executive officer, and commanding officer as directed by standing orders to the OOD
- Supervising and conducting the on-the-job training for the JOOW, JOOD, and the enlisted personnel of the quarterdeck watch

The duties of the OOD are far less complex in port than at sea, but the in-port watch is still a very demanding job. The OOD supervises the quarterdeck and gangway and greets all visitors. The OOD maintains the security of the unit, inspects packages and liberty parties, and carries out the ship's routine. While performing all these duties simultaneously, the OOD sometimes finds the job overwhelming. Having complete authority over the ship, under the CDO, enables the OOD to control all the functions of the job.

## **DIVISION OFFICERS**

As mentioned earlier, your first assignment will probably be as a division officer. The size of a division varies. Some divisions may have as few as 5 personnel, while others may have as many as 300. Regardless of division size, as the division officer you will be responsible for ensuring the division operates properly and efficiently. Some

of the duties and responsibilities of the division officer are as follows:

- Assuming responsibility for the duties assigned to the division and for the conduct of subordinates
- Promptly reporting to the department head repairs required or other defects needing correction that are beyond the capabilities of the division
- Ensuring optimum material readiness within the division
- Directing the operation of the division through leading petty officers
- Supervising the performance of the work centers within the division in carrying out the ship's maintenance and material management
- Ensuring damage control equipment, fittings, and checkoff lists in assigned spaces are in proper working condition and are properly labeled

These duties and responsibilities represent only a portion of the division officer's tasks. Other responsibilities may be assigned by department heads, the executive officer, or the commanding officer. Many of the division officer's duties are performed daily, while others are performed less frequently.

Sometimes you may feel you don't have enough hours in the day to perform all of your duties. This is where proper time management and the effective use of your division personnel come into play. To run your division effectively, you have to delegate some of your authority to your chiefs and leading petty officers. Keep in mind, however, that while you may delegate authority, you cannot delegate your responsibility or accountability.

## **INSPECTIONS**

One way the division officer can ensure the division meets all of its requirements is by holding inspections. By personal supervision and frequent inspections, the division officer can ensure personnel satisfactorily maintain spaces, equipment, and supplies assigned to the division. Through these inspections, the division officer can

identify and require the removal of safety hazards and discover and correct material discrepancies.

The division officer should also inspect division personnel at morning quarters to ensure they present a neat, clean, and well-groomed appearance. Conducting daily personnel inspections ensures the division's readiness for a surprise inspection by the executive officer or the department head.

Additionally, division officers should inspect all assigned spaces on a daily basis. The division officer should not delegate this responsibility. Inspecting all the spaces for cleanliness indicates to division personnel that the division officer cares about them and their living and working conditions. It also gives the division officer the opportunity to talk to subordinates. As the division officer, praise the division for clean spaces, unless you note deficiencies. Set standards for cleanliness and then ensure those standards are met.

Periodically, external inspection teams will conduct inspections. These inspections include the operational readiness evaluation (ORE), maintenance and material management systems inspection, command inspection, board of inspection and survey (INSURV) inspection, and operational propulsion plant examination (OPPE). As the division officer, you are responsible for preparing your division for these inspections and ensuring your division is ready when the inspection party arrives.

## TRAINING

To have an efficient division, the division officer has to ensure all division personnel are properly trained. *SORN* devotes an entire chapter to the subject of training. It provides guidance to help you develop and schedule a division training program.

Divisional training programs should cover in-rate, watch station, systems, and general military training topics. The training program should also include personnel qualification standards (PQS). Additionally, all naval personnel should receive training in safety.

Safety training programs should be designed to teach personnel safety-related precautions. The training should provide personnel with enough information to ensure their safety and well-being. Such information should lessen their chances of being injured or killed or of causing damage or destruction to our limited material resources.

The total safety program encompasses all safety areas, such as aviation, shipboard, and weapons and/or explosives safety, as well as occupational safety and health. The Navy Occupational Safety and Health (NAVOSH) Program is a major component of the total safety program.

Over the last several years, the CNO has issued many instructions that address employee safety and health issues. The purpose of the instructions has been to update the NAVOSH Program and to combine these instructions into a single organized program. The NAVOSH instruction currently in effect is OPNAVINST 5100.23B.

## QUALIFICATIONS

Division officers are responsible for ensuring their personnel qualify for the watches they stand as well for their in-rate advancement. To ensure personnel qualify in a timely manner, the division officer should track the progress of division members. The qualification process goes hand in hand with the division training program. If an effective training program is in place, personnel will qualify for watches and advancement quickly.

While keeping the division qualifications on track, division officers must also complete their own necessary qualifications. Trying to achieve your own qualifications while keeping up with those of division personnel may seem like a full-time job; but you are responsible for both.

## Advancement in Rate

Personnel must meet various qualifications to advance in their rate. Some of these qualifications apply to all enlisted personnel, while others may only apply to their particular rate.

To qualify for advancement for the next higher paygrade, all enlisted personnel in paygrades E-4 through E-7 must complete the applicable personnel advancement requirements (PARs). They also must pass the military/leadership exam and the Navywide advancement exam for their rate and have their commanding officer's recommendation. Other advancement requirements are also necessary, such as requiring personnel to complete performance tests or specific courses successfully or to attend certain schools.

To provide the leadership and guidance needed to help personnel advance in rate, division officers should become familiar with the rating qualifications of their personnel. The *Advancement*

*Handbook for Petty Officers*, published annually for each rating, provides an excellent source of information on these requirements.

### Watch Stations

Almost every division of any command in the Navy requires personnel to stand watches. Although the requirements for the different watches may vary, personnel must meet the qualifications for each watch they stand. Division officers must provide qualified individuals from their division to meet these watch requirements.

Before personnel can stand a watch, they must complete the PQS for that watch. The PQS Program qualifies officer and enlisted personnel to perform portions of their assigned duties. This could include a specific watch station, such as OOD or a specific job, such as 3-M coordinator. Personnel qualification standards are a written compilation of the knowledge and skills required for a specific watch station. Division officers have the responsibility of tracking the progress of their personnel in completing the PQS required of them. Having an efficient watch team requires having personnel who are properly qualified to stand the watches. Anything less is an invitation to disaster.

### SUMMARY

While being a naval officer may not be one of the easiest jobs you have, it could well be the most rewarding. It might not make you rich or famous, but it can be a job in which you have great pride.

Your duties as a naval officer are immense; yet so is your authority. Use this authority wisely in performing your duties. Remember, the gold bars you wear on your collar don't make you smarter; they only give you authority. Depend on your chiefs and petty officers for guidance; they

have the experience and can teach you much if you will let them.

Think back on chapter 1 for a moment. Do you remember what the role of the U.S. Navy is according to Title 10 of the U.S. Code? The Navy's role is to be ready to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations in support of the national interest. For the Navy to be able to fulfill this role, you, as a naval officer, must be ready to perform your military duties. Only through self-examination, study of your job, and mature and rational performance can you fulfill your duties and responsibilities as a naval officer.

### REFERENCES

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### SUGGESTED READING

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## DOG WATCH

DOG WATCH IS THE NAME GIVEN TO THE 1600-1800 AND THE 1800-2000 WATCHES ABOARD SHIP. THE 1600-2000 4-HOUR WATCH WAS ORIGINALLY SPLIT TO PREVENT MEN FROM ALWAYS HAVING TO STAND THE SAME WATCHES DAILY. AS A RESULT, SAILORS DODGE THE SAME DAILY ROUTINE, HENCE THEY ARE DODGING THE WATCH OR STANDING THE DODGE WATCH.

IN ITS CORRUPTED FORM, DODGE BECAME DOG AND PROCEDURE IS REFERRED TO AS "DOGGING THE WATCH" OR STANDING THE "DOG WATCH."

